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NSC BRIEFING

9 December 1954

JAPAN'S NEW PREMIER

I. Overnight press reports state that a coalition of Socialists and anti-Yoshida conservatives (new Democratic Party) in the Japanese Diet have elected Ichiro Hatoyama as Prime Minister in place of recently-resigned Yoshida.

A. The vote was 257 for Hatoyama as against 191 for Ogata, the new president of Yoshida's Liberal Party.

B. Hatoyama votes from 120 Democrats, 61 Right Socialists, 73 Left Socialists, and 3 minor parties.

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C. Socialist's support for Hatoyama leader of the anti-Yoshida conservatives, was apparently won at price of agreement on new national elections early next year.

1. Conservatives had opposed new elections, feeling only Socialists would benefit thereby.

D. Still partially paralyzed by '52 stroke, Hatoyama will be a figurehead in the interim regime

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E. The Diet will be dissolved in late January, elections follow on 10 March.

II. Hatoyama is man of great charm and personal warmth, has been very friendly in contacts with American officials.

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A. Favors Japanese rearmament.

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B. Told press, after Yoshida's resignation, "Japan survives only because of" security alliance with US.

C. Is strongly anti-Communist, but favors diplomatic relations, expanded trade with Communist China, USSR.

III. Need not expect Hatoyama government to change Japanese foreign policy.

A. Will be forced take cognizance increased popular favor towards "normalization" relations with Orbit, and Communist China in particular.

B. However, will continue policy co-operation with US and West, although this co-operation will be on tougher, more nationalistic basis.

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D. Barring conservative amalgamation
bitter, deep-seated personal
rivalrie in a struggle for
control of the conservative
movement promises little prospect
for stable government in the
immediate future.

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Hatoyama, Ichiro 71 (Japan Democrat)

Partly paralyzed veteran politician, prominent in public affairs since 1915. He organized the postwar Liberal party and was deprived of the prime ministership by MacArthur's purge in 1946. Restored to political life in 1951 he became a bitter rival of Prime Minister Yoshida. Hatoyama strongly opposed Communism within Japan, but favors closer relations with the Orbit without jeopardizing ties with the United States. His financial policies are likely to be influenced by the inflationist Ishibahi, and his pro-rearmament stand could weaken under popular pressure.

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